

Tales of Ice and Love

by wolfchic011

Category: Frozen

Genre: Friendship, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Anna, Elsa

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2014-03-28 19:09:33

Updated: 2014-03-28 19:09:33

Packaged: 2016-04-26 18:11:45

Rating: T

Chapters: 2

Words: 13,465

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Formerly Forbidden Friendship. A series of unrelated stories about two young girls in various scenarios. Sometimes they are sisters. Sometimes they are lovers, sometimes merely friends. But always, they are together. Always, their lives touch. Many AU young Elsannas.

1. Forbidden Friendship

A.N.: Just a few changes have been made to Arendelle for the sake of the story: the king and queen are still alive, Elsa is the only princess and slavery is prominent.

****Song for this fic**:** _Forbidden Friendship_ from _How to Train Your Dragon_.

****Summary**:** Princess Elsa has lived a quiet, lonely, sheltered life. Except for one little secret. Can be read as young Elsanna or just friendship. Not incest/icest.

* * *

><p>The first time she saw her was on one of her rare appearances in front of the townsfolk.<p>

Autumn in Arendelle was a time of great reflection and festivity. Harvest festivals were held every year supplying the people with splashes of colorful banners hung all over the city, the Royal Parade, the Troll's Prophecy Pageant and enough glogg that everyone forgot the atrocious actors spewing out the kingdom's prophesized icy doom. Every year, at the start of the harvest, the people donned rich, earthy colors and lit their fish oil lamps every sunrise, praying desperately that winter would come when it was the proper time and no sooner. All too often, winter got impatient and swept down from the mountains mid-harvest to rot the grain in frost or ice the ships in harbor. But sometimes, very infrequently, the winter was

patient.

The little kingdom on the fjord had prospered during this past short growing season and was eagerly preparing to collect and store the fruits of its labor. Now they just had to hope winter was patient this year.

As the parade kicked off the festivities, the people all gathered along the edges of the road, craning their necks and shoving each other passive-aggressively, all of them hoping to see the one new fixture in the otherwise unchanging parade. But through the thick battalion of soldiers surrounding the royal family, barely more than a wisp of platinum hair was visible of the elusive princess.

The little Princess Elsa tailed along next to her mother, holding her hand tightly and glancing around nervously at the crowd of civilians peering eagerly at her through the ranks of soldiers. All she saw were people, people everywhere. More people than she'd known existed in their small kingdom.

The musicians played, the dancers leapt and Kai announced them over and over as they walked around town. The people cheered and clapped and raised glasses of glogg high in the air or bowed their head respectfully as the King, Queen and little Princess passed by them.

Elsa was considerably shorter than most of the people in the crowd. She could peer between soldiers' legs easily. Not that she was of course. People frightened her.

The ten-year old girl wanted to bury her face in her mother's skirts to avoid all the staring. But she was a princess, Arendelle's only princess. And a princess is poised and fair. So Elsa swallowed her fear and held her head high, looking forward with calm patience. Today, she could handle it. Today, the gloves were enough.

Elsa had been completely focused on looking forward. So she'd only seen the tiny girl out of the corner of her eye and from quite a distance. But the image had imprinted itself on her mind and struck straight to her core like a burst of autumn rain.

She was a slave, of that much the princess could be certain even from a quick glance. There were scratches all over her face and bruises from the palm of her master. Her clothes were baggy and shapeless, torn in places and caked in mud and horse dung. Her reddish hair was tied back in two lopsided pigtails, like it had grown in crooked. She couldn't have been older than seven and couldn't have had any less to her name.

But she had been smiling.

Hiding in the shadows, squatting in a heap of garbage on the edge of an alley, the little girl had a smile on her face like she was opening gifts on her birthday.

The smile lit up her entire face so much that it threw the rest of her into shadow. Her eyes blazed, her hair seemed to untangle itself and it mattered not if she wore royal robes, torn garments or nothing at all. Elsa was riveted. Here was true happiness: a child's amazement at the beauty of the world around her. A complete disregard

of her own problems and circumstances simply because other people were celebrating and laughing together and that was a beautiful thing.

Little Elsa thought that this girl should never do anything but smile again.

She had paused in the parade, hoping to keep the girl in her sights for a little awhile longer, hoping to get the girl to notice her.

But the queen had tugged her hand and Elsa had been swept away. And by the end of the day, she had been through so much that she forgot about the momentary encounter just as assuredly as the drunk festival attendees forgot the words of the Troll's Prophecy Pageant.

* * *

><p>The second time was several weeks later.<p>

The leaves had all turned and most had fallen on the naked fields of Arendelle, which still remained mercifully free of winter. The air had chilled but not enough that frost had been seen on the remaining heads of wheat. Extra field hands were being called in from the shops in town and the slaves of the surrounding districts for the unprecedented opportunity for a harvest to be completed before winter's wrath ruined the crops. It was the first time in recent memory that anyone could recall such patience on the part of nature.

Elsa was supposed to have been in history lessons with her tutor but had been let out early when they discovered that today was one of those days when even holding onto a pen was impossible for the young princess.

She wandered the castle halls aimlessly instead, shaking her gloves to try to get them to dry. Everything she touched today was frosting over, she didn't know how to stop it.

The princess had walked past the door to her parents' room, a thin dusting of snow following her. She had quickened her pace as if it would make the ice melt. It had only made it come faster.

Sometimes there were days like this. Days when the cold air inside her seeped out. When the snow just followed her everywhere and the ice frosted everything she touched.

Elsa had ran the last few doors to room, barely dodging the maid coming out of the spare room next to hers and slamming her door in a most unlady-like manner.

She sank against it, the snow and ice particles swirling around her. Why today? She had been fine yesterday, she knew she would be fine tomorrow if only she could get there. In the meantime, she just had to lock herself away and pray that she wouldn't ice too many things.

Elsa had walked over to her window, thinking that perhaps the sight of the last leaves of autumn falling might help her calm down. Instead, she had found herself seeing the gate to the garden under

her window being opened by Arun, the palace slave master and several ragged-looking slaves stepping timidly inside. Elsa had stood silently on her window seat cushion to watch. It was the end of the harvest so additional slaves were being brought in to gather as much from the palace grounds as they could before winter began to set in.

One of those slaves was her.

There were several other child slaves with the laborers which was why Elsa had not immediately recognized the smiling girl. But when one of the slaves had laughed at the sight of a butterfly beating its fragile wings over the garden and had been silenced by Arun with a threatening crack of his whip, memories from the parade came crashing back.

Elsa had pressed her face against the window, not caring that she was causing it to ice over.

It was undoubtedly her. Now that she remembered the encounter, there was no mistaking the lopsided pigtails, the dirty face and that brilliant smile.

She had remembered the girl's hair as slightly darker and shorter, her skin as somewhat fairer than it appeared now. She had not noticed the freckles or the way her nose turned up slightly at the end.

The child had settled into her work, throwing herself at the root vegetables with such enthusiasm and rigor that Elsa as well as the other slaves couldn't help but smile.

Elsa watched, intrigued as the child bent both knees, grabbed the stem of a carrot with both hands and heaved backwards with all her might. After a second, she relaxed, the carrot not having budged an inch. Undeterred, she wiggled her bottom, shifted her grip and pulled again. This time the carrot popped free, sending her sprawling on her rear, the carrot clutched triumphantly in hand.

Elsa had watched with an intense curiosity. Her tutor had always told her that slaves were the uncivilized scum of the earth, captives from Arendelle's empire that the kingdom used to lower the cost of labor and production. They were uneducated barbarians only suited for hard labor and discipline. They did not play, they could not laugh. If they did, they were beaten into submission.

Elsa had once asked if she could meet some of the slaves. Her tutor had told her not to be ridiculous. A princess was not meant to mingle with slaves. They were there to be the invisible structure in her life that kept it running smoothly without her ever suspecting someone was holding it up. She would never interact with them.

But as the princess had looked at the slave girl, a girl who was smiling and skipping despite her hard life and difficult work, she had wanted nothing more than to never take her eyes off of her again.

There were thousands of slaves, her tutor always said. Slaves were replaceable. In a good system, you never saw a slave more than once.

Elsa had suddenly become terrified that she might never lay eyes on the girl again. Or worse, she might once again forget how her braids were lopsided, how her smile warmed her eyes and how the spring in her step made her seem more cultured and beautiful than any Arendellian Elsa had ever met. Desperate never to forget the way she looked again, Elsa had taken a sheet of paper from her notebook and plunked herself down on the window seat to watch the slaves work. She hadn't even realized she'd started drawing until the girl's face was half-way formed on the page in front of her.

She had sat at her window until sunset, painstakingly capturing the scene: the young girl dripping in sweat, her backside bent as she toiled over the root vegetables, grasping a single one with both hands and using her whole body to pull it free. But the smile was there, and there was a certain lightness to the toiling scene, like the subject actually very much enjoyed the work.

When the sun set and the slaves had filed out, Elsa had noticed the slave girl looking up at the palace, a strange sort of longing on her face. Elsa had pressed herself back against the wall, suddenly shy that the slave girl might notice her watching.

As the slaves vanished back to their master's manor and the sea swallowed the sun, Elsa had become aware of a startling discovery. The entire time she had been drawing, not a single ice crystal had formed. And the ice on the window had melted.

* * *

><p>The third time they actually both got to look at each other.<p>

It was late summer. The previous autumn had finally succumbed to winter but only after a full and plentiful harvest. The cold winds and snow had raged for four months before spring finally drove winter back up the mountain. Even summer had been mild, allowing another plentiful harvest to take root. Everyone was getting very excited and more apprehensive as the harvest festival approached.

Elsa had just turned eleven and not a day had gone by when she hadn't thought of the little smiling slave girl who had her hair in lopsided pigtailed. On this particular day, Elsa had opted to take a solitary walk around the edges of the palace woodlot instead of attending etiquette lessons. She knew that they would eventually start to worry about where she was (she hadn't told anyone she was going, that would be rude) but she'd never been caught before and had always managed to make some excuse for her random absences.

Elsa had skipped a little along the rough forest path, giggling and enjoying the freedom from watchful eyes and the restrictions presenting herself as a princess constantly imposed.

She escaped out here once a week on varying days to be alone, not always during her etiquette lessons.

Elsa valued her limited freedom and the time she got to spend when she was truly alone. There was a difference between lonely and alone.

As she walked, Elsa had touched her sleeve softly several times,

assuring herself that her most valued possession was still there. She carried the drawing with her everywhere, tucked into the sleeve of her left glove. Feeling the paper press against her skin always seemed to calm her powers on days when the gloves were not enough. She would never ruin this drawing, not even by accident.

She had made no new drawings. It seemed wrong to try to draw the girl without seeing her.

Elsa had walked further than she had meant to that day. Normally once the castle was out of sight she immediately turned back around and made her way home. But on this particular day, she had continued walking for no other reason than that she liked the way the setting sun lit up the leaves on the trees, their edges just starting to curl and color with the coming of autumn.

Finally, the young princess had come upon a small, abandoned shed in the woods and stopped to rest.

In the past, Arendelle had had an ice master who lived out here, gathering ice and seeing that it reached market in a timely manner. But eventually it had been decided a shed would serve better use if kept closer to the ice so the shed in palace grounds had been abandoned.

The young princess had pulled open the rotting door and slipped inside the shack, curious as to how an ice master had lived. She often wondered if she could have been the ice master if she hadn't been a princess.

The shed had been dark and charming, with the kind of silence one only gets from ruins and places forsaken by all other humans. Elsa had loved it and sat with her back to the door for quite some time admiring the various tools used to harvest ice and the simple living arrangements of a working man.

Elsa had been enjoying the silence when suddenly there was a knock upon the door at her back.

Jumping to her feet, her heart pounding, she had pressed her face against a crack in the wood to see who it was who had found her in the forest.

Her heart had stopped. It was her.

The little slave girl was in the clearing, her hands above her head, twirling freely. She appeared to be dancing and had knocked on the door only to keep time for herself as she danced past.

Elsa had kept very silent and watched in fascination as the person who had been haunting her dreams and thoughts danced and skipped past her, completely oblivious to her presence.

In the past few months, the girl's hair had grown out. It was still adorably lopsided but long enough to braid instead of just sticking out from her head in pigtails. The girl was taller, beginning to leave the adorable shortness of youth behind for a hint of the gangly limbs of pre-adolescence. She was wearing a long patchwork dress that looked like it had been passed down through all the slaves in Arendelle and no shoes. But that had in no way hindered her. The

child had twirled and sang loudly in varying pitches, letting her voice echo off of the trees, the shed and its transfixed occupant.

The display was more uplifting and inspiring than anything Elsa or her hopeful dancing instructor could have imagined. Elsa should have felt jealous that a slave could dance better than the princess but had found she could not feel anything but respect and admiration. The dance belonged to the slave girl. It was beautiful because she had been the one doing it.

The girl laughed and the princess had felt her heart soar. Her laugh was even more spectacular than her smile.

Not really thinking and eager to see more, Elsa had pressed herself closer to the shed door and found herself stumbling out into the clearing as it gave way.

Startled by the sound of the door opening, the slave had slipped on her long dress and tumbled forward, crying out.

Their timing could not have been better than if they'd rehearsed it and they had collided spectacularly. Elsa had grabbed as their bodies met and found she was holding the slave girl under the arms, their torsos pressed tightly together. Unable to compensate the full weight of both herself and the other girl, Elsa had stumbled and fallen backwards, the slave landing on top of her in the dirt.

The two of them had laid there for a second staring at each other; one confused, the other merely surprised and perhaps a bit pleased. Elsa was staring right into the beautiful eyes whose color she'd had to guess in her drawing. Surprisingly, she had been right. They were icy blue like hers. One of the lopsided braids was touching her cheek.

Then abruptly, the slave had pushed herself to her feet and backed away from Elsa, muttering in a strange language Elsa could not understand, her head bowed meekly. The action had affected Elsa deeply and she had suddenly been reminded that this girl was a slave and therefore, was supposed to be invisible to people such as her. The smiling, dancing girl was the secret life Elsa was not ever supposed to know existed or care about.

The princess had tried to assure her that it was fine, that all was forgiven as she stood and brushed herself off, smiling at the little girl. More than anything she wanted the slave girl to be comfortable around her, to smile again. She had reached out to take the girl's hand or pat her arm but the slave had flinched away from her, speaking in that strange language and seeming terrified. With a glance at Elsa's confused, slightly hurt face, the slave had darted away into the darkening woods with all the speed and skill of a forest creature.

The explanation had come to the princess several seconds after the slave had vanished from sight. Of course, slaves from the west only spoke Dravidian, few of them ever learned English because it was often not required for the work they did, nor did their masters care to teach them. And the girl was too young anyway. There was no way she had been taught anything but her native language.

They could not speak to each other. This realization had caused a thin trail of ice to follow Elsa home that night.

* * *

><p>The fourth time, Elsa finally learned her name.<p>

Autumn was upon them again. Winter's patience had so far held out for the second year in a row and Arendelle was once again scrambling to collect the harvest.

Elsa had hoped that would mean the little slave would be returning to the palace to help with the harvest but so far, she had not seen her among the laborers. There had been another group that day, completely different from the previous day's. But not one of them had the smile she craved to see.

So Elsa had returned to the spot in the woods once again and laid out her goods from this day's kitchen raid: a loaf of bread, a slice of cheese and a few dates she'd stolen from the breakfast platter. It was a pitiful amount but Elsa had reasoned, the girl was not starving, merely underfed by her masters. If she couldn't speak to the girl, maybe she could at least communicate with her.

The day had been cool and brisk, with a strong wind rattling the remaining dead leaves high in the trees every so often. Elsa had not been wearing a coat. Cold never bothered her anyways.

She had left things here once a week for the past few months, without fail. There was no way to prove it, but Elsa was certain the food and clothes were reaching the little slave girl she couldn't seem to take her mind off of. So for the past three months she had been coming back to the old ice-master's shack and leaving food and small gifts: An old pair of her shoes that she had outgrown, a length of fabric that could make a new dress, a tiny bar of soap, a doll with hair a similar color to the slave girl's.

But not once had she seen the slave girl.

Like always, Elsa had settled down against the door of the shack to wait, like a hunter watching a trap to see if today the food and trinkets she had brought (a few small wooden toys) would finally bring the slave girl back. But as the daylight faded further on the shortening days, Elsa had sighed and stood, preparing herself for another disappointing trudge back to the castle, comforted only by the knowledge that the girl would enjoy the food and toys.

She had just reached the edge of the clearing when a quiet voice had stopped her dead in her tracks. She had turned slowly, hardly daring to believe it.

It was indeed the girl. And the smile was back. Elsa's heart had soared. She had taken a small step closer but paused as the slave's face had immediately closed off and her head had dropped.

So Elsa had remained where she was as the slave slowly made her way over to the gifts and squatted down next to them, eagerly stuffing the cheese and bread into her mouth and gagging on the dates.

She was wearing the shoes, Elsa had noted with pride. Now that she

had an opportunity to observe the girl up close for a long time, Elsa had set about guessing her age. The girl's long limbs and slightly rounded face put her somewhere between seven and eight, the princess had guessed, although her eyes seemed much younger.

As she had picked up the toys, the slave girl had looked up and met the princess's gaze shyly. Elsa had drawn a deep breath. Had she been there every time, the princess had wondered, waiting under the cover of the trees but too afraid to make herself known to the princess?

Elsa had taken one look in the girl's eyes and known this to be true.

Why had she come out this time?

"Anna."

Distracted by the clear, strong voice, Elsa had completely missed the words it spoke. "What?"

The slave girl had pointed at herself. "Anna." She said again. Shyly, she pointed at Elsa's face. "Prinkessa."

Elsa pointed to herself as well. "Elsa." She had said.

"Elsa" The slave repeated. Then she had smiled.

The slave had scampered away into the woods after that, clutching the tiny toys joyfully to her chest. But Elsa had remained in the clearing until well after dark, unable to stop smiling.

* * *

<p>The fifth time made them friends.</p>

It was the first snow and Princess Elsa had been enjoying some time outside the palace walls, relishing in the one season that let her be herself without hurting anyone. Her powers had been growing stronger this past year but thoughts of Anna helped her keep them under control. No one in the palace, not even the maid who chipped ice from the walls knew that she could now shape perfect snowflakes and ice sculptures whenever she wanted.

She had been trying to return to the shed in the woods to see the slave girl, Anna again but her etiquette tutor had finally grown impatient at her constant absence from her lessons with him and told her father who had made her sit for all the lessons at once.

So Autumn had been chased away by the howling Winter as Elsa had sat in a stuffy room, politely answering questions, balancing books on her head and repeating mantras of good charm and will all the while wondering how many carrots Anna had pulled that harvest.

Elsa had been walking around the edge of the palace grounds, clomping through the foot of snow in a most unlady-like manner and contemplating escaping into the woods but knowing that she'd be caught very quickly with her father keeping a closer eye on her. And that would mean no more visits to try to see Anna again.

The princess had been about to retreat back inside when a laugh had echoed across the silent yard, setting her very core vibrating.

Elsa could have identified that laugh in a crowded room with a full brass band playing.

"Elsa?"

The young princess felt her heart soar.

The slave girl had found her.

Anna had stepped forward, smiling timidly as she trudged through the snow, hauling a bucket behind her. She had beamed up at Elsa as they drew closer. The bucket sloshed with water, probably taken from the well just outside the castle yard.

Anna must be owned by a nearby nobleman, Elsa had realized. There would be no other reason for her to be gathering water from that well.

As the slave set the bucket down, the princess had noticed a glaring black-blue bruise around the girl's left eye. She had stepped closer and run a gentle finger along the fresh bruise on Anna's face as the slave looked on in curiosity. She had been hit by her master.

It wasn't fair. Anna, the sweetest, kindest, best person Elsa had ever met was the one who would be beaten most cruelly just for being who she was. The princess had felt her eyes tearing up and had to look away from Anna as inexplicable shame rose in her chest.

To her surprise, Anna had taken her hand from her face and held it reassuringly in her own.

Anna wasn't wearing mittens of any kind and her dress sleeve had barely covered her wrist. But her hands were _warm_. So warm.

Elsa had marveled at this as their palms slid together, the hard, calloused palms of the slave scraping against the pale, soft ones of the princess. She'd looked into ice-blue eyes that matched her own and found her chest constricting at the impossibly soft look in Anna's eyes.

And at that moment, without Anna saying a word, Elsa had known the slave girl didn't want to be anywhere but at her side.

Softly, Elsa had extracted her hand and turned away, not wanted to cause Anna to be late for her chores and receive more beatings. She had gently gestured for Anna to pick up the bucket and leave, sad that they would not get to spend time together.

But Anna had had ideas of her own.

A thick, wet snowball had collided with Elsa's neck, snow raining on her shoulders. An absolutely adorable giggle had followed it.

Without thinking Elsa had turned with a wicked smile, swirled her hands in front of her body, gathering the power between them, forcing it to expandâ€|

When she had finished, there was an enormous ball of snow hovering above her hands.

When she had seen Anna's utterly dumbfounded face, Elsa's heart had stopped.

No one outside the palace knew about her powers.

What had she done?

It had just been so natural. Around Anna, she could be free, be herself without being judged. But this...Anna was going to be afraid of her, she was going to run away. Elsa's heart had clenched. She'd never see her again.

But to the Princess's surprise, the corners of Anna's mouth had slowly turned upwards as she looked at the giant snowball. She began to bounce lightly on the balls of her feet, grinning at Elsa.

Then had Anna squealed in delight and pelted off running. After a moment of stunned pleasure, Elsa had chased after her, laughing like she hadn't in years, balancing the enormous snowball above her head.

She had chased Anna halfway across the grounds before she'd finally thrown the giant snowball. It exploded around the girl, burying her in an instant.

"Anna!" Elsa had cried, rushing forward, terrified that she had killed the girl under all that snow.

But a small-fiery head had popped out of the pile a few seconds later, giggling and grinning madly. Anna had turned to Elsa, her face flushed with cold and wet with snow.

"Catchme!" Anna had shouted, wriggling free from the pile and dashing off again, glancing back excitedly to see if Elsa was following.

Elsa hadn't needed to understand Dravidian to know what that meant. She had made another snowball and hurled it after Anna's retreating form.

When they had finally tired of chasing each other with snowballs, Anna had gently taken Elsa's hand again.

"Sannamen?" She asked.

Elsa had furrowed her brow, not understanding the word.

Anna had repeated the word and stooped down to start rolling snow into a large ball. Then Elsa had understood.

The snowman they built was thick and round and barely as tall as Elsa, with a kind face and a smile of chocolate pieces Elsa had stolen from the kitchens to snack on.

There was something about making him with her hands rather than her gift that made Elsa's chest feel very light. As she added the final

piece of his smile, she'd turned to Anna for approval.

And the little slave girl had eagerly rushed forward and thrown her arms around the tiny snowman and the princess, smiling so brightly that Elsa had felt certain she would melt right along with the snowman.

Before today, her powers had never given her the slightest bit of pleasure.

Now, Elsa would gladly keep them forever if it meant building more snowmen with Anna.

* * *

><p>The final time came too soon.<p>

Elsa and Anna had continued to see each other regularly for over a year, meeting up at the old ice shed to go for long walks in the woods whenever Anna could sneak away and Elsa could come out of her room, sneaking into the palace kitchens and sampling all the chocolate, building snowmen in the ballroom at night no matter what the season. Elsa had never been happier. Anna had never smiled so much despite the bruises and cuts littering her body that seemed to multiply each time Elsa saw her.

Elsa was now approaching her thirteenth birthday. Her Father, the king was keeping a very close eye on her in apprehension of the upcoming milestone. Thirteen was her bridge to womanhood and her acceptance of her birthright as the next queen.

Anna had just turned nine, which she had assured Elsa of using her fingers and much excited jabbering in her native language.

The two had met at the ice shed at the agreed upon day and time. Elsa had known she didn't have long that day, her father was expecting her for a ceremonial rehearsal about an hour from the time she and Anna met. But any time with the slave girl was better than nothing.

Anna had led the walk today, taking Elsa back along the path she usually scampered down when they parted. She had jabbered excitedly the whole time, even though she knew Elsa couldn't understand a word of it. Elsa hadn't cared. She could listen to Anna talk all day.

Anna had led her behind the great waterfall gracing Arendelle's fjord, through Lord Mithran's lands (where Anna had grabbed Elsa's arm and pointed gleefully at the slave quarters, clearing up the mystery of her ownership) and finally back to the clearing.

There, Anna's face had turned up expectantly in a look Elsa knew better than she knew her own reflection. She'd smiled back.

The snowman they'd built had been small and lopsided, since Elsa had known she was running out of time. But Anna had seemed to love it even more than their other ones. And to Elsa's astonishment, when they'd finished, the slave had pulled a carrot out of the sleeve of her dress and boldly added it to the snowman's face.

In the princess's eye, it had been perfect.

When they had parted, the two of them had agreed as usual to the time of their next meeting: holding up fingers to say how many days, indicating a sun position for the time. Two days from then at a little after noon had been decided. Then Anna had dashed off into the woods, as usual, not looking back. And Elsa had turned away too, smiling to herself and not taking advantage of the opportunity to look at Anna one last time.

And then, like a dead leaf on an Autumn breeze, Anna was gone.

The next day, Elsa had been sitting in on a trade meeting with her father, an Arendelle nobleman and a foreign trade partner. The sun had been slowly setting and Elsa was exhausted but still diligently taking notes. Her pen had moved automatically in her gloved hand as her thoughts drifted to the next day, to Anna.

She'd been practicing making slippery ice, eager to take Anna sledding or ice skating. She'd nearly perfected it. She knew it would make Anna so happyâ€¦|

She had been so lost in thought, she almost missed what her father promised the foreign nobleman in exchange for desperately needed additional storage coffers for the unprecedented surplus harvest from yet another patient year.

Slaves. Two hundred of the finest from the castle and Arendelle nobles.

This by itself would not have bothered Elsa very much. Slaves were sold all the time. Only the nobleman in attendance, the one currently nodding his agreement was none other than Lord Mithran.

The temperature in the room had dropped impossibly fast. Elsa had felt her gloves turn to ice as her stomach dropped to the floor and stayed there. Her father had caught her gaze and his eyes had flashed dangerously. As Elsa had stood and practically ran from the room, her father had made excuses for her. Elsa didn't hear them.

The door to her room slammed and she ripped off the gloves. She'd begun pacing, unable to calm down.

It was just a slave trade, they happened all the time. Anna had been safe up until now, why shouldn't she still be?

All the same, Elsa had been panicking so badly her room iced over in several inches of rime. Finally, she'd thrown open her window, conjured a large pile of snow outside and leapt out of it, pelting off towards the forest.

Elsa had desperately escaped to the shed, pacing in the moonlight and praying that by some miracle Anna would appear. She paced all night, her bare feet growing dirty and bloody, the snow falling thickly all around her. She would have tried to find her way back along the path Anna had taken her on earlier but feared losing her way in the dark wood. So Elsa had waited.

Anna never came.

She was not there at the agreed upon time the next day either.

You never see a good slave more than once.

Elsa had barricaded herself in her room for days to hold back the cold, refusing meals and company but it still had not been enough. The entire palace had been doused in snowflakes and ice, causing the staff to walk the halls bundled up in several layers, cursing as they slipped and muttering in hushed whispers about what had made the princess upset. No one knew.

In the end, everyone agreed it was just nerves about the upcoming ceremony.

Alone in her room, the princess curled up on the ice-coated floor, unable to move. The air around her was frozen with glittering ice crystals and snowflakes suspended in place.

She should have known. All the bruises, all the cuts, every time Anna had winced when Elsa patted her back. A rebellious slave is quick to be beaten. And even quicker to be sold.

Had Anna known? Had she known that day in the woods that day they'd built the lopsided snowman—had she known it was her last time seeing Elsa?

Elsa had wept bitterly at the thought of the little girl hiding that pain from her.

They had never had a real conversation, never spent more than a few hours together at a time, never slept in the same bed or shared more than a few bites of food. But Elsa had never felt closer to anyone in her life.

And now she was gone.

Now today, on her coronation day, the new Queen of Arendelle had been presented with a gift of slaves from Weselton. One of them had been a thin, strong girl with fiery braids and brilliant ice-blue eyes.

"A fine, strong worker." The slave-master had told her when the normally passive queen had paused, staring at the specimen before her. He'd taken hold of the slave's arm and pulled her forward for the queen to examine more closely. He bared his teeth in a grin. "She's also perfect for breeding."

But she wasn't Anna.

Little Anna, with the brilliant smile, unbreakable spirit and strong, warm hands. Anna, who reminded Elsa that she was not alone. Anna, whose warm touch had thawed Elsa's lonely heart.

The queen had stared at the slave so long that she forgot everything else.

Little Anna was gone, crushed into the life of a slave, the fire in her eyes long dead and her smile forgotten like the fallen leaves of Autumns past. She did not meet Elsa's gaze.

She had been beaten into submission.

That was the day Winter's patience ran out.

* * *

><p>A.N. If there is sufficient interest, I may expand this or write an Anna's POV one-shot. But I kind of like it as an AU could've-been pairing. Reviews please!<p>

2. Hell-Fractals

A.N.: So as I was struggling to come up with a sequel to Forbidden Friendship and getting nowhere but tied up in clichés, it hit me. Don't write one. Nevertheless, I loved the response FF got and I'm currently giving in to my obsession with these two (and avoiding working on _Council _revision). So I had a couple of ideas for stories like FF where I could explore the vast universe of Elsanna more deeply. So here's the first idea I came up with. I thankfully have several more, but I'm open to suggestions. _Forbidden Friendship _has become chapter 1.

All AU's will be in Arendelle, around the same time period as the movie, Elsa will always have powers and not all endings will be happy or even endings at all. Critical feedback on this will make me so happy. The reviews for FF had me in tears. Thanks guys. :)

Also, don't be shy to shoot an idea my way. If it strikes my imagination, I'll give it a shot!

So because I tried so hard on this one, I'm going to confess it is probably not of the same quality as _Forbidden Friendship_. Nevertheless, I hope you enjoy it and leave me lots of feedback!

****Song for this fic/alternate title****: _Something to Fight For_ by Sencit music

****Summary****: Death always collects in war. War is hell. But there is no reason why those caught in the cross-fire need to be enemies.

Hell-fractals

No one really knew why there was a war.

Arendelle was not a large kingdom, nor was it particularly wealthy, nor could it claim any strategic military advantage. There was not much worth fighting for except the everyday well-being of the citizens and the majesty of the fjord and surrounding mountains. So for centuries, the tiny kingdom enjoyed a peaceful existence, its citizens purchasing fish and vegetables at market, its farmers laboring in the fields, its rulers gently and firmly handling all disputes and foreign affairs. Life was comforting, if not entirely comfortable.

Then one day, it rained fire.

The common folk woke to find their cobblestone streets riddled with cannonballs, smoke blocking out the sun, flames licking at the wooden structures. Enormous ships filled the harbor, blocking in the

merchants and fishermen, driving the navy into deeper waters. Soldiers came ashore in endless waves, swords brandished, helms gleaming. Hundreds died in that first initial attack. Thousands more were left homeless, orphaned, injured or some combination of the three. Chaos became the new norm.

For over a month, no one could fathom why the fighting had started. Then slowly, like a pathogen, the truth spread among the masses. There had been news of a shipwreck several weeks prior, before the ships had arrived. But none of the common city-folk had seemed to realize at the time that said shipwreck had led the child-less Arendelle king and queen to their watery graves.

Needless to say, the vultures had descended as soon as that carcass was opened.

Arendelle had not had enemies per se but many of their allies were large, powerful empires who preferred to swallow their allies rather than trade with them. Now they squabbled over the ruler-less land like children, their armies clashing on the very thing they wished to claim, making no distinctions between enemy, ally or innocent bystander.

After three bloody, endless years of war, it was the empire of the Southern Isles that finally claimed Arendelle as its own.

The soldiers settled in the town, taking full advantage of the lack of military to claim ownership of the castle and the noblemen's lands surrounding, soaking up the spoils. The remnants of the defeated nations retreated to their homelands and the people slowly began to crawl back to the light.

That would have been the end of the conflict. A new king would have eventually risen from the ranks of the invaders, perhaps their young, charismatic, ruthless commander Prince Hans and the common folk would have eventually settled down again under new laws and learned to love their new overlords.

Except that some had chosen not to bend so easily. Remnants of the Arendelle army, noblemen who had been booted from their homes and farmers whose lands had been burned in the war descended from the forests, determined to drive out the soldiers and restore Arendelle to its former glory, never mind the lack of an heir. They stormed the city at random intervals, attacking soldiers, burning supplies and firing stolen cannons. The fighting was savage and brutal and could sometimes last for days with neither side gaining or losing much ground. It was a horrid stalemate where desperation met desolation and the flames of war burst to life in unpredictable spurts of heat, destruction and bloodshed.

And while these dogs fought and snarled at each other over the feast, it was the mice under their feet struggling for the smallest tidbits who suffered the most.

* * *

><p>Elsa had been born before the war. But it defined her life from the moment she drew her first breath. The fighting had started when she was barely three months old and only lapsed once when she was about four. The next year, the rebels had organized and attacked and

in the space of about an hour, she found her home destroyed, her parents dead and a long scar marring her right leg from mid-thigh to ankle.<p>

Homeless, helpless and alone, she had taken to the streets and learned to survive. She stole food whenever she could and suffered the pangs of hunger when she couldn't. She learned the booms of the cannons and the crackling of fire even through the thick haze of sleep so that even if she'd been deep inside a dream, she could awaken and scamper from whatever hole she'd tucked herself into for the night to survive another day.

Death became a constant threat.

She was not fast or strong nor any more cunning than your average city orphan. In fights over food or sleeping spaces, she was more likely to snatch and flee or hide than face a fight head on. It was all about survival: take only the risks necessary to get that crust of bread to keep from starving, that blanket to keep the rain from soaking you completely through. Elsa lived her days alone in a haze of split-second decisions, each one a gamble for life.

But Elsa had one advantage that the others did not and it would ultimately save her life. An advantage she only discovered by nearly dying.

It happened how everything in war always happens: without warning or time to think.

Elsa had been in the main square outside the castle gates, waiting for the kitchen scraps from the castle to be thrown out the window so she wouldn't starve today.

She was nearing her tenth birthday and was in desperate need of a new dress to commemorate the occasion. Not for vanity, you'll understand, the only dress she currently owned she was wearing and it could hardly be called a 'dress'. She'd had it for two years, it was torn nearly to shreds and three inches too short in the sleeves and hem.

Bored and trying not to think about her dress or the pangs of hunger in her stomach, Elsa had instead begun observing the other children. Several other children had been waiting around her for their chance at castle scraps. All sorts gathered here: pudgy kids from further uptown who usually got by on bread crusts from the former baking district, dock hands who were as scrawny as the fish they caught and inner-city orphans in varying states of health and dress. Nothing took Elsa by surprise anymore, not even children missing several limbs painstakingly dragging themselves around on make-shift crutches. Such was war.

Today there was even one kid with a white streak in her hair. Gods knew how that had gotten there. Elsa only paid attention to it because it was the same color as her own hair. The child attached to it wasn't much to look at: scrawny and flea-bitten with hair that stuck up in every which way imaginable. The little white streak of hair danced among thick wisps of strawberry-blonde caked with mud, perfectly clean and defiant of everything that seemed to define its owner.

Bored as she was, Elsa couldn't help but be fascinated by it.

So focused was she on the streak, she didn't hear the tell-tale shriek of cannon-fire until it was nearly upon her.

In a moment of panic, she realized her predicament was hopeless: she was too exposed, there was nowhere to run. And there were too many people here, scattering in all directions. All the children around her were crying, screaming and running or standing in paralyzed fear. There was no time to think.

There was an intense flare of heat and the acrid smell of air burning as the projectile whistled towards them. This was the end. Elsa didn't know what came over her but quite suddenly she threw herself forward and folded her body around the child closest to her, the small, terrified girl with the white streak in her hair. She took a gamble and she won.

Later, those who survived the attack would describe the impossibility that had happened. As the small, white-haired child closed her arms around the smaller girl, the air around the square suddenly seemed to drop in temperature. Then again, anything was cold compared to the burning heat of the cannonballs.

When the smoke cleared, there was a giant sheet of ice curled around the place where the two children had been, slowly dripping onto the shrapnel on the street. The two girls were nowhere to be seen.

It was assumed neither had survived.

* * *

><p>Elsa had taken the trembling girl to the caved-in shack where she had been planning to spend the night. Well not so much taken as dragged, the child hadn't let go of her arm since Elsa had pulled her out of the ice shield. Elsa would have been in shock about that too except for her concern about the child.<p>

The girl was shaking so violently, Elsa could feel herself trembling in response. She seemed incapable of moving without Elsa's guidance.

The little girl only let go of Elsa when her legs gave out. And even then, she was practically sitting on Elsa's feet, making it impossible to move away. The poor child sat there, whimpering, sniffing and occasionally muttering to herself.

Elsa's own lack of response to the circumstances was scaring her more than the knowledge that death had almost grabbed her was. She'd never done anything like that before. She'd lost a gamble, she should have been dead, they both should have perished. Death had been cheated.

But that all seemed trivial when the reason for it was so impossible.

She'd made _ice_. From nothing.

Elsa examined her hands but they looked no different than normal. They felt a little cooler maybe but that could mean anything. She

flexed her fingers and willed ice to form but nothing happened.

Elsa closed her palms and tilted her head back, thinking. Her life was an endless struggle: the struggle simply to live another day, to keep pushing through until some unknown future was bestowed upon her. She was always starting over, with the end in doubt as all she knew constantly was destroyed. Now she not only had another to push through that hell, she also had some kind of gift.

Unable to spontaneously return the ice, Elsa examined the lucky child she had saved.

She was not a native Arendellian, of that Elsa was certain. The sheer number of freckles on her face clearly indicated a more southern origin than Arendelle could claim and when she did speak, her accent was wrong.

The girl sniffled and buried her head further into Elsa's hip. She was one of them, Elsa realized. One of the children of the soldiers who had invaded and seen fit to spread his progeny around the town. These were the symbols of the destruction wrought by the war: a blending of two uncooperative cultures that existed no matter how hard others tried to stamp it out. Children like her were scum even to the scum of the streets. Elsa had seen Arendellian parents throw such children as these out of their cellars and barns into the cold and the cannon-fire for no reason other than spite. These were the first children to be killed by the Rebels on their raids.

But Elsa had known from the moment she'd thrown her arms around her, she could not abandon this child.

This was war. In wars, it was better to have allies than to be alone among enemies.

Softly stroking the child's hair, Elsa had asked her name. The child hadn't replied, staring up at the taller girl with wide eyes still swimming in tears. Elsa stared into them. They were a deep icy blue, identical to her own. If she hadn't been so certain this child was Southern Isles' scum, Elsa could've sworn she'd just found her long-lost sister.

Elsa had tried asking her name again in the Southern Isles' language, words of which she had picked up when scavenging near the nobles' lands. The girl had shaken her head and buried her face in Elsa's hip, the tiny white streak in her hair, twisting and flapping among her dirty mud-streaked locks.

She refused to look up, no matter what Elsa said or how she prodded her.

Frustrated, Elsa contemplated smacking the child to force her to cooperate. But the thought had barely formed in her mind when there was a sound outside. It was little more than a crash, perhaps a crate had fallen off of a merchant's cart or said cart had hit the side of the building. The girl had reacted to the crash as if another bomb had gone off. With a cry of pure fear, she threw her arms around Elsa's neck and buried her face into Elsa's shoulder.

Without any hint of shyness or trepidation of Elsa's powers. Trusting her completely.

Something surged through the small blonde girl as she held the younger girl's body close. Something inside of her grew until it filled her entire frame, sweeping away her past, cleansing her mind of everything that used to matter and filling it with a warm, flaring heat that made her feel older, stronger, bigger.

Elsa recalled the feeling as similar to that which had overcome her at the moment she jumped forward back in the square.

Immediately her hands grew cold.

Still holding the child against her, she opened her palm and a ball of snow that glowed with a soft blue light rose into the air. It drifted lazily upward, bathing the embracing girls in soft blue light. When it hit the sagging roof of their shelter, it burst, sending delicate snowflakes drifting down over the pair.

Elsa gently nudged the girl until she lifted her head. When the girl's eyes went wide with wonder and amazement, Elsa felt the feeling within her settle thickly over her limbs, painting her heart an entirely new color.

She didn't care at all.

She would never raise a finger against this girl. No matter the circumstance, for as long as she lived, she would protect this child.

The child gently caught a snowflake and watched it melt on her palm. Then she turned to Elsa, a question and an unspoken request in her eyes. Elsa understood immediately. Raising her hands again, she sent more snowflakes into the air. The action became easier with every repetition.

Finally, when the entire room danced with delicate snowflakes, the girl spoke for the first time.

"My name is Anna."

* * *

><p>From that day on, Elsa took Anna with her everywhere. She couldn't seem to lose the girl, even for a second. Like a shadow, Anna clung to Elsa, stepping in her footprints and catching the corner of her eye. Not that Elsa minded in the slightest. War is hell and those who want to survive know that more hands make it easier to smother the flames. Especially when one of those pairs of hands can conjure ice and snow.<p>

Elsa taught Anna how to braid her hair, weaving the uncompromising white-streak into delicate patterns among the darker ones, like a snowflake dancing on an autumn breeze. She had to admit, when Anna's unruly hair was washed and braided, it was actually quite beautiful. The braids suited her: they were both beautiful and functional. Anna always smiled brightly when Elsa braided her hair. She could do it herself but almost always asked the older girl to do it instead. Elsa never said no. Braiding Anna's hair was one of the few things in this hell that made her relax. And it made Anna smile.

The two of them became a pair, making survival into a game that they won ceaselessly.

Snatching food and necessities were easier when one of them could cause a distraction: Elsa with a little snow or Anna with her uncanny ability to draw every eye to her either with her singing and dancing or her clumsy habit of completely unintentionally knocking large things over.

Nothing and no one was safe from their antics. They stole fresh bread from the bakers, shoes off of the cobbler's feet and even dresses from seamstresses. Some of the townsfolk began to whisper but the activities seemed harmless enough. They weren't hurting anyone, just struggling to survive like everyone else. Finding snowmen in the middle of summer was no longer a shock to the people of Arendelle. So they let them be.

Elsa, a child who had never known real joy, suddenly found she knew what happiness felt like. She had to admit, with a friend, life became so much brighter.

The two of them lived together, moving around the city, dodging attacks, surviving.

The bombings were still scary times for the younger girl but Anna coped with her fear the only way she knew how: by wrapping Elsa's arms around herself and letting the older girl protect and comfort her until the danger or nightmare had passed.

When Anna wasn't afraid, she gave Elsa hope. While there was plenty of fire in hell, none burned brighter than little Anna.

Anna smiled far more often than a child of war should have been capable of. She found beauty even among the horrors around them, pointing out both interesting patterns of shrapnel damage on buildings as well as delicate flowers springing up through the broken cobblestones. Small animals loved her and often flocked to her, even at night as they slept. She regularly sang and ran even when such things were not necessary.

At night, whenever the Northern Lights appeared through the smoke, she would poke Elsa awake without fail and sit on top of her until the older girl took her outside to look at them.

But all these things did nothing but make Elsa's heart grow for her. To her, Anna was an angel lost in the wrong realm. An angel Elsa had been charged to protect.

Elsa practiced with her newfound gift endlessly, determined to always be able to protect Anna. She no longer cared about her own day-to-day survival. Anna had taken the paramount position in her life. On nights when they couldn't steal enough food, she went hungry to ensure Anna had enough. All her clothes, except the ones she needed to wear went to the younger girl even if they were too big. Elsa gave up her sturdy black shoes to Anna and went barefoot even in winter.

Elsa didn't care.

She had finally found something to fight for.

Inevitably there were others who joined their little group: Kristoff the grubby woodsboy and his pet reindeer Sven who had fled their homeland when the rebels invaded them, Olaf the clingy toddler who had nearly died in a fire and hugged Anna tightly every time he saw her. Kai the little servant's child who lost his way after a cannonball sent a piece of shrapnel through his left eye, and Gerda, a kind soul with burned hands who always knew where to find food on account of the fact that her parents had been Arendelle's best bakers.

They were survivors. Children of war. Victims of the unholy doctrine of the generations before them.

Anna made such friends very easily, just as assuredly as she drew breath and she always brought them back to Elsa, almost like she was seeking her approval. Elsa cared for all of them without question and helped them find their way out of hell or survive it as best as possible. But it was always Anna who came first.

Anna always got the extra crumb of bread, even though she usually gave it to one of the others. Anna always slept next to Elsa at night, with the older girl's arms wrapped protectively around her. Anna always got the ice first if one of them was burned by a blast.

Elsa's favoritism of Anna was far from secret, if anything it was the most obvious thing about her. If the others cared about this, they said nothing. They saw the look in Elsa's eyes when Anna was smiling, the pain when Anna was suffering. They noticed the way Elsa always took Anna's hands in her own and how Elsa's hugs belonged only to her. No one complained but several knowing smiles were shared.

It was hard to deny Anna's innocent charm and pull. And soon to them, Anna became their lives as well.

One day Elsa, Anna and Kristoff had been stealing bread from a bakery that was mercifully still running when the screaming had started.

Elsa hadn't even waited to see who was attacking who or what this time, she'd grabbed Anna around the waist, making the girl drop the loaves she'd snatched and half-pushed, half-thrown her to Kristoff. Kristoff wasn't even surprised; he'd grabbed the girl and like a well-practiced drill, dashed out the door with her in his arms and tossed her onto Sven's back.

Sven had dashed away, despite Anna's protests for him to stop, to go back and rescue the others. The reindeer had only slowed when he'd reached the shelter of the grounded ship where they, Olaf, Kai and Gerda had been planning to stay that night.

Anna had been ready to dash back out to save them but Sven prevented her from doing so, no matter how hard she tried.

Gerda took her hands and Olaf wrapped himself around her leg as Kai and Sven watched for their friends. All they could do was wait as they listened to the far away sounds of the other side of the city burning and try not to imagine the worst.

When Elsa and Kristoff finally returned to the shelter two hours later, grimy but otherwise unhurt, Anna had tackled Elsa around the middle and cried unceasingly.

"Don't ever do that again!" She sobbed, clinging tightly to Elsa as the older girl's heart broke. "Don't leave me on my own."

Elsa brushed Anna's bangs back from her face. She promised that she never would.

Sensing that the two of them would not need company, Kristoff ushered the others further into the ship, glancing back with a small smile on his face as the two embraced completely.

Elsa held Anna tightly, small tremors racking her body as the events of the day caught up to her.

When she'd heard the scream, her only thought had been for Anna. The roof had collapsed just as Sven ran off. If they had waited even a second more, Anna would have been buried in the rubble.

The only thing that had helped her climb out of the wreckage of the bakery and run past the attacking soldiers was the knowledge that Anna was alive. That at least she had made it home safe.

That was all she needed to know.

Elsa sobbed quietly into Anna's shoulder, determined to hide her fear and her tears from the younger girl. As strong as Elsa was around the younger girl, such close scrapes with Death frightened her. She knew Death was coming to collect payment from when she'd saved Anna the first time, angry that she had taken the angel away from him.

But so long as Anna was still alive, Elsa knew she could die happy. She would gladly trade her life for Anna's if Death gave her that option.

The two of them eventually cried themselves out and sank to the floor, still tangled up in their embrace.

Elsa kept apologizing, murmuring reassurances against Anna's hair. Eventually, they ended up sprawled on the floor, still wrapped tightly together, tears drying into hard tracts on their faces.

It was then that Anna tilted her head up slightly and touched Elsa's lips with her own.

It was barely more than a gentle brush of lips, something two close friends or sisters might do as a parting gesture.

But Elsa didn't feel like it was supposed to be taken that way.

* * *

><p>Several years passed and Elsa grew into a graceful, smart, respected young ruffian of the street. Many of the orphans knew her and respected her for her kindness and the icy gift that she readily shared. She had become a sort of ruler among the street children. Ice Queen some called her in excited, hushed whispers. If anyone had nowhere to go or nothing to eat, the Ice Queen was the

person you sought out for help.

Now approaching 18, Elsa was thin, pale and beautiful, her flawless platinum hair and piercing icy blue eyes turning the heads of both men and women as she walked down the street.

Anna had grown up as well: her hair had lengthened into two long braids that slapped her shoulders when she skipped down the street. Her legs were long and lithe from all her years of running and dancing and her skin was tanned from hours spent outside. She was almost 15, but in many ways she was still the same little girl Elsa had taken in all those years ago. She still could not sleep without Elsa pressed against her, she still trusted the older girl and loved her unconditionally. She still woke Elsa up every night the lights were visible. She was still adorably clumsy and full of bright fire.

The two were inseparable and no one questioned it.

After years of careful practice, Elsa had gained considerable mastery over her powers, so much so that she had taken to building the orphans she cared for a tiny ice palace on the edge of the harbor where they ended up settling most nights. The number of orphans varied on a nightly basis, more tended to stay in the ice palace during the summer when it was too hot to sleep anywhere else. In the winter, only Anna would stay with her.

Kristoff and Sven were still with them of course and Olaf visited occasionally but Kai and Gerda had left to travel north several years back as stowaways on board a merchant ship. Elsa could only hope they had made it past the rebel blockades and to safety.

It was not often someone escaped hell.

Elsa had often thought of trying to escape herself. But where would she go? The North Mountain? She supposed that could work. It might actually be nice up there, away from hell. She could build herself a giant ice palace and revel in the freedom of being alone and safe from war.

But not without Anna of course. And she could never take Anna away from Arendelle. Although only half-native by blood, Anna belonged to Arendelle even more than Elsa did. It was her city. Anna knew passages around the city that even Elsa was not aware of. She was sometimes able to predict raids before even Sven's keen nose detected a whiff of smoke.

Elsa may be the Ice Queen but Anna was the Spring Princess. Everyone loved her, even if they did not know her name. Most simply knew her as Elsa's constant companion. But even that was enough for them to love her. It was her devotion to Elsa that helped those afraid of her powers overcome their apprehension to ask for help from the girl.

They occasionally shared kisses like the one they had all those years ago. But Elsa irrationally and selfishly longed for more. Anna had become so much more than just a friend to her, so much more than just someone she had to protect.

Anna had always been her whole world. Elsa had started to doubt that

she had really existed before she'd thrown her arms around the frightened child in the square.

Caught up in her bliss, she had forgotten that she had stolen Anna from Death. And Death never forgot a debt.

It began as things in hell often do. Without warning.

Of course rumors about Arendelle's "ice witch" had spread among the people; citizen, soldier and rebel alike. From rumors had spun stories and stories had fathered fear.

At first, the rebels wanted her for their idolized New Arendelle. She would sit on the throne as their new queen, despite her simple upbringing. But then some began to fear that her powers could not be controlled. What if she killed them all? What if she became an icy tyrant?

The soldiers saw her as a threat. The one piece that could wrest their tenuous grasp on the kingdom from them. Or perhaps a weapon that might be useful.

Hell feeds fear and fear breeds desperation.

* * *

><p>The attack came on a warm spring night.<p>

Anna had been curled against Elsa, fast asleep when she suddenly jolted awake. That was odd for Anna because Elsa so often teased her for her ability to sleep through cannon-fire (a feat Anna had achieved several times, to Elsa's concern). While Anna excelled at anticipating attacks in daylight, Elsa and Kristoff were the ones who heard them through the haze of sleep. Anna usually only woke spontaneously when the sky did.

But the night was black and smoky tonight. No lights danced across the sky.

Anna didn't know why she had woken up and was about burrow closer to Elsa's reassuring heartbeat to drift back to sleep when she heard a sound cut through the silence and the dark.

A sound they all knew too well.

"Elsa!" She screamed, shaking the older girl.

Elsa's eyes had flown open. She hadn't asked any questions or made a sound. Suddenly, the floor under Anna grew slick and she began to slid away from Elsa. With a push, Elsa sent Anna sliding away from her, letting a hand linger briefly on Anna's shoulder as the younger girl left her grip.

Breaking her promise for the first time in ten years.

Anna struggled and fought but the ground under her was quickly becoming a slide, taking her down from the room her and Elsa shared, around the main staircase of the castle and down the back wall. Anna was half-way down the stairs before she could even whisper Elsa's name.

Sven and Kristoff were waiting at the bottom, almost as if they had anticipated such a thing happening. Before her feet even touched the ground, Kristoff had scooped Anna into his arms and jumped on the reindeer. They cantered away as the first cannon-ball hit the street.

Anna heard the screams of the children sleeping on the lower floors. She saw numerous cannonballs hit the entryway, blocking the main escape. She twisted in Kristoff's grip, pleading for him to take her back, to help them, to get back to Elsa.

The older boy had only tightened his grip. He'd always had a weak spot for Anna. But when her safety was on the line, his judgment grew far sharper and harder to break.

Elsa knew this of course. She also knew that one day, someone would come after her because of her powers. And when that day came, she'd have to break her promise to Anna.

From her vantage point in the palace's highest room, she saw Sven, Kristoff and Anna reach the old storage house across the docks that was their rendezvous point. All concern lifted from her heart as she saw Kristoff drag Anna inside, his arms wrapped tightly around the clearly struggling girl.

Kristoff would keep her safe, would keep her from running back to try to help while she saved as many of the others as she could.

What Elsa didn't know was where the cannons would be aiming.

She watched the roof of the storage house collapse as if in a dream. As flames licked at the wreckage of their safe haven, something inside the girl snapped.

The soldiers invaded the palace of ice, searching for Elsa, stepping over the carcasses of children or kicking aside those that remained alive.

It was so dark, no one could tell if they were rebels or Southern Isles soldiers.

Elsa didn't care. She heard the cries of the children and the guttural sound of blades meeting flesh as if through a thick haze. The booms of the cannons sounded like they belonged to another world.

Elsa was gone. All she could see was Anna's trusting face as she had pushed her away. Why hadn't she kept her promise? Then Anna would at least be here, beside her now. Still alive.

It didn't matter which side it was that caused the building to collapse. They were all in hell. There is no revenge or redemption.

The invaders burst into her room as snow began to swirl tightly around Elsa's form.

When they saw the look on her face, several of them felt all their resolve drain away.

Slowly, the Ice Queen turned to face the intruders.

Then Elsa screamed and the wall behind her exploded into millions of flying fractals of ice. Shrapnel from the Ice Queen. The invaders covered their eyes but the ice found its way into the tiniest of openings, piercing skin and clothes, expanding and growing. Several screams died in throats as ice invaded their mouths and choked the life from them.

Panicking, several of them who could still breathe charged the girl.

The ice was taking control of Elsa now, she couldn't have stopped it if she wanted to.

She rose to her feet, snow swirling tightly around her in a blizzard of anger and hate. With a sweep of her hand, they all went flying backwards. Several were pierced by long icicles that had risen from the floor. The ice became red.

Elsa only felt her anger.

One of those still alive tried foolishly to shoot her with an arrow. An icicle pierced his throat before he'd even touched the trigger.

Anyone who tried to attack her ended up impaled or frozen solid. None could touch her.

Elsa's power swirled inside her, mixing with her rage and began to flurry all around, making her feel bigger, stronger. Invincible.

The soldiers all fell before her, one by one.

She was the Ice Queen! She was a goddess raining judgment on these stupid humans.

She wasâ€¦

Death.

Just as quickly and violently as it had come, all the fury and battle lust drained from Elsa. The snow swirling in the air all froze in place, as if time had stopped.

Elsa finally, really saw what had happened in the few moments where she had lost control.

The room was littered in corpses and discarded weapons, the walls were spattered in blood. Bodies hung propped up on the end of icicles that slowly dripped water and blood onto the floor.

It was hell.

She had become Death.

A single soldier remained alive in front of her, his sword held limply by his side. Resigned to his death by her.

Looking at him, the realization crashed over Elsa with the weight of a thousand cannonballs.

He hadn't fired the cannon. He hadn't cut Anna down or forced her into that building.

Death had collected. Anna was gone.

Elsa had taken Anna's life.

With a strangled cry, the entire ice palace split in two and crumbled to pieces.

* * *

><p>Of course it hadn't been enough to kill her. Her own ice would not hurt her, no matter how much she wished it would.<p>

Elsa stood firmly on the ground as if she hadn't just fallen two stories, surrounded by the pieces of her creation and the bodies of those whose blood was on her hands: the soldiers who had wanted to kill her and the children who had trusted her to protect them.

Blood ran in rivulets down the shards of ice, pooling all around her.

Truly, this was the real hell.

Just next to her, a single soldier, still mercifully alive, was struggling to free himself from under a thick beam of ice. With a flick of her hand, Elsa made it vanish. He sat up, dazed and clutching his sword. It was the same man from above: the soldier with thick auburn hair and bright green eyes who she had spared.

When those eyes saw Elsa, they filled with murderous intent.

Elsa only turned towards him, her hands at her sides. She was ready to die. Ready to see Anna again. Death could come and collect its debt now that it had had its cruel revenge on her, to hell with this petty, meaningless life of hers.

Why had she never kissed Anna the way she wanted to?

The soldier lashed out, the pommel of his sword catching Elsa on the side of the head.

Elsa reeled backwards and fell hard, tripping over one of the children's bodies as she clutched her head. Her vision swam and went blissfully blurry as the soldier raised his sword to finally deliver the death-blow. She could hear Anna's voice again. Death must be closeâ€|

As Elsa drew her last breath, gazing up at the eyes of the reaper, she could have sworn Anna was there. An angel lost in the midst of hell. Standing betweenâ€|wait.

The realization hit her in the fraction of a second before her world ended.

Anna was alive.

Anna was between Elsa and the soldier, her arms spread wide, staring down at her, protecting Elsa the same way the girl had protected her all those years ago. She stood tall and firm, resolute like a statue. Her eyes blazed with defiance and love as the sword swung down.

Elsa had always protected her. Now it was Anna's turn.

Only Anna had no ice.

There was nothing to stop the blade.

At that very moment, the sun rose, painting the horizon a bloody red and casting an eerie illumination across the scene.

To the soldier, she was just another kill, another ended life to make them one inch closer to claiming their prize. Another splash of blood on the shattered cobblestones. Another body in the wreckage of the ice palace. One more of a vast number to pray to his god for forgiveness for.

To Elsa, helplessly watching as a beautiful fantasy morphed into a cold, hard reality, the loss was unfathomable beyond the descriptive power of mere words.

That day, the citizens of Arendelle who greeted the dawn had a new question they would never receive an answer to:

Why was it snowing in hell?

* * *

><p>A.N.: Please listen to this song if you are not familiar with it. It is a beautiful, dramatic, heartbreaking piece of music that brought this to mind.<p>

So kind of a similar set-up and plot to Forbidden Friendship but I wanted to place the girls in a desperate situation and see what happened. I guess this one kind of became more of an 'Elsa's devotion to Anna' kind of thing. I need to stop "killing" Annaâ€|this is becoming a problem. I promise I will try to make my next one of these end on a happier note!

Was this better than Forbidden Friendship or was it somewhat lacking? Should I continue this one-shot collection?

Also, did anybody catch the Rent reference? Let me know if you did, it's kind of subtle. There also may or may not be an If/Then reference in hereâ€|not sure how many are familiar with thatâ€|point it out if you see it though!

End
file.